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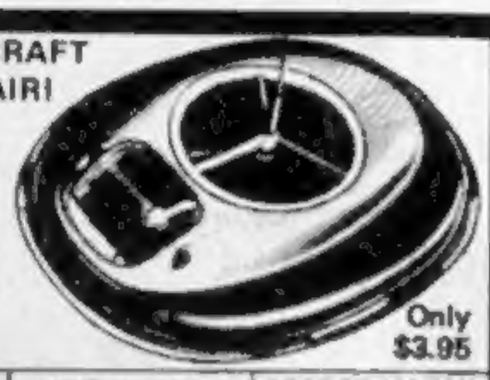

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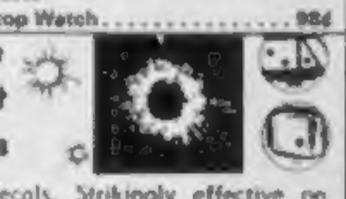

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P-PLEASE! D-DON'T! Y-YOU'VE GOT NO ***RIGHT*** TO K-KILL ME IN THAT BUZZ SAW! DO YOU ***HEAR*** ME? Y-YOU'VE GOT NO ***RIGHT!!***

J-3584

SCRIPT - MICHAEL FLEISHER
SCRIPT CONTINUITY - RUSSELL CARLEY
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EDITOR - JOE ORLANDO

BRZZZZZZ

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NIGHTTIME IN NEW YORK, AS THE LEECHES OF THE UNDERWORLD CRAWL FORTH FROM THEIR SLIMY CREVASSES TO ROB THE HELPLESS AND SLAUGHTER THE INNOCENT...

WHEEE!!

POL

RAT-TAT-TAT-T

STEP ON IT, JERRY! WE'LL MISS THE LASSIE SHOW!

I'M COMIN'! I'M COMIN'!

HA!

YOU GUYS SHOULDA SEEN TH' LOOK ON THE PIG'S FACE WHEN I SHOT OUT THEIR WINDSHIELD!

RAT

TAT-T

THE GETAWAY CAR HURTLES THROUGH THE POLLUTION-CLOGGED STREETS, THE SHRIEKING SQUAD CAR IN HOT PURSUIT...

BOY! THEM FUZZ MUSTA ATE THEIR WHEATIES THIS MORNIN'! THEY'RE STILL--

HEY! LOOK OUT!!

IMPEACH NIXON

SKREEEEE

OH, SHUT UP!

KRAA

BEER

SPLIT UP! MEET YOU BOTH IN A WEEK AT *MAIZIE'S* PLACE!

CHECK!

AND SO...

FLEIS… REFRIGERA… PLANT No. 7

BLASTED *COPS!* THEY MAKE ME FIT T' *PUKE!*

BRAIT

BRRR! WELL IT AIN'T EXACTLY TH' RITZ...

...BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE ENTRANCE, SO I'LL BE ABLE T' SNUFF ME PLENTY 'A BLUE-BOYS IF THEY TRY T'--

BRRR! SURE IS *COLD* IN HERE! LOOKIT ALL THAT--

H-HEY! WH-WHO'RE YOU?

I AM CALLED...

...THE *SPECTRE*--!

T-TAT

RAT-TAT-T-T-T

CONGRATULATIONS, SPECTRE! NOW DROP DEAD!

BUT YOU SEE... I AM... ALREADY DEAD!

ALREADY DEAD?! THAT'S THE CRAZIEST---

H-HEY! WH-WHAT'S GOIN' ON? WH-WHAT'S--

NGYAAAAAAAA

HEY! DIDJA HEAR THAT? I TOLD YA I SAW ONE'A THEM GRANDENETTIS GO IN THERE!

CAREFUL, FREDDY! HE'S GOT A--

--MACHINE... GUN--!

GASP!

WH-WHEN I TELL MY W-WIFE ABOUT THIS... SH-SHE'S GONNA SAY I BEEN DRINKIN' AGAIN!

THAT'S WHAT I-I'M GONNA SAY... WH-WHEN YOU TELL M-ME ABOUT IT!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

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D. Easthon

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BIZARRE, YOU SAY? OF COURSE IT IS BIZARRE. BUT NEW YORKERS HAVE BECOME USED TO THE BIZARRE. FOR MOST, THE VIOLENT DEATH OF A FUGITIVE KILLER IS BUT A TITILLATING INTERLUDE BETWEEN THE WEATHER REPORT AND THE WATERGATE TAPES. BUT ONE MAN VIEWS THESE EVENTS WITH A HEIGHTENED INTEREST. HE IS FREELANCE MAGAZINE WRITER EARL CRAWFORD...

DAILY NEWS

GANGSTER DEAD IN MYSTERY SLAYING

IT *CAN'T* BE A COINCIDENCE! IT JUST... *CAN'T* BE!

WHEN IT ALL STARTED ABOUT EIGHT MONTHS AGO, I FIGURED I MIGHT USE THE MATERIAL FOR SOME KIND OF *HUMAN-INTEREST* ARTICLE... MAYBE TREAT IT LIKE A *U.F.O.* KIND OF THING!

BUT THERE'S A LOT MORE TO THIS THAN A FEW DRUNKEN *FARM-BOYS* SEEING LITTLE GREEN *MEN* SOMEWHERE OUT IN THE *BOONIES!*

SKELETON FOUND ON PLANE:

PASSENGERS RECOUNT BIZARRE EVENTS

A WHOLE *PLANELOAD* OF PEOPLE SAW THAT GUNMAN TURN INTO A *SKELETON* BEFORE THEIR VERY *EYES!*..

...AND THIS *SPIRITUALIST*... TURNED TO *GLASS* RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A *SEANCE!*

THE WOMEN WHO WITNESSED *THAT* WERE *RICH* WOMEN... THEIR HUSBANDS ARE *PILLARS* OF THE *COMMUNITY!*

MAN TURN TO GLASS

AUTHO PONDE WEIRD MYSTE

NO, SIR! SOMEONE... OR SOMETHING... IS *DOING* THESE THINGS... AND DOING THEM ON *PUR-POSE!* MAYBE SOME *FORCE* THAT WE CAN'T EVEN *COMPREHEND!*

WHATEVER THAT FORCE IS... WHATEVER ITS MOTIVES... RIGHT NOW IT SEEMS TO BE AFTER THE **GRANDENETTI** GANG! MAYBE THAT'LL GIVE ME THE HANDLE I NEED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS THING!

PRESENTLY...

NEWSBEAT

WHAAAT!? HAVE YOU COMPLETELY LOST YOUR **MARBLES**?

LOST MY **MARBLES**? WHY IN BLAZES ARE YOU ACCUSING ME OF **THAT**?

OH, I DON'T KNOW! MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE JUST GOT THROUGH TELLING ME HOW A SINISTER OCCULT **FORCE** IS FLYING AROUND THE CITY USING HIS MAGICAL **POWERS** TO **KILL** PEOPLE!

PLEASE, BOB!

WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S AFTER THE **GRANDENETTIS!** ALL I ASK IS A CHANCE TO COVER THE STORY ON MY OWN **TIME!** IF--

ALL RIGHT! I'LL DO IT! I'LL TELL 'EM YOU'RE WORKING ON A ROUTINE **CRIME** STORY FOR **NEWSBEAT!**

BUT FOR PETE'S **SAKE**, DON'T TELL THE POLICE DEPARTMENT THE **REAL** REASON YOU'RE DOING THIS! **PLEASE!** I DON'T WANT 'EM THINKIN' WE'RE **BOTH** FRUITCAKES!

SOMETIME LATER...

NO! I WON'T DO IT! POLICE WORK IS DANGEROUS! I'VE GOT NO TIME TO PLAY NURSEMAID TO A...A...

I KNOW, CORRIGAN! I KNOW! BUT WE WANT GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE MEDIA... AND NEWSBEAT MAGAZINE'S GOT A LOT OF CLOUT IN THIS TOWN!

BESIDES, IT'LL ONLY BE FOR A DAY OR TWO, TILL WE ROUND UP THE GRANDENETTIS!

AND SO...

HELLO, LT. CORRIGAN! I'M--

I KNOW EXACTLY WHO YOU ARE! YOU'RE CLARK KENT, MILD-MANNERED REPORTER!

POLICE

WELL, LISTEN HERE, CLARK! THE GRANDENETTI BOYS ARE KILLERS! THEY'VE KILLED THREE COPS AND A HALF A DOZEN INNOCENT BYSTANDERS! IF YOU WANT TO RIDE WITH ME, YOU SHUT UP AND STAY OUT OF MY WAY!

Whew!

FIRST WE'LL--

ALL UNITS IN DISTRICT 7 PROCEED TO 586 LEXINGTON--! MITCH GRANDENETTI HAS BARRICADED HIMSELF INSIDE CONKLIN'S TOY EMPORIUM WITH FOUR HOSTAGES--! HE IS WELL-ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS! OVER!

MINUTES LATER...

BOY, LIEUTENANT, AM I GLAD TO SEE **YOU!** HE'S INSIDE THERE... GOT THE CLERK AND THREE CUSTOMERS **HOSTAGE!** SAYS HE'LL ICE EVERY **ONE** OF 'EM UNLESS WE GIVE HIM A **CAR** AND A TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR **HEAD START!**

LOOK, SERGEANT! YOU KEEP **CLARK KENT** HERE OUTA **MISCHIEF!** I'LL GO AROUND **BACK**... SEE IF I CAN DO SOMETHING **INGENIOUS** BEFORE THAT KILLER WASTES TOO MANY MORE PEOPLE!

CLARK KENT? GEE, ARE YOU REALLY **SUPERMAN?**

MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE STORE...

GRANDENETTI! GIVE IT UP! COME ON OUT!

SHE'LL! I'LL COME OUT!

DC

BLAM

5-50

AND **YOU!** STOP MAKIN' ALL THAT **RACKET** OR I'LL

HEY! WHAT'S THAT **NOISE?** WHAT'S THAT **NOISE** I HEARD?

YOU PEOPLE BETTER PRAY THAT NOISE WASN'T MADE BY NO STINKIN' **COPPERS** SNEAKIN' IN THE **BACK!**

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWI

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KLUNK

WHA-!?

ALL RIGHT, COPPER! THE GAME'S OVER! I KNOW THE MONKEY DIDN'T WIND *ITSELF* UP...

...SO SUPPOSE YOU JUST--

=GASP!= A-AIN'T YOU A LITTLE E-EARLY FOR *HALLOWEEN*, S-SWEETHEART?

ENJOY WHAT MIRTH YOU CAN, VILLAIN--! AFTER ALL...

...YOU HAVE SO LITTLE... *TIME*--!

H-HEY! TH-THAT *THING* THAT'S HAPPENIN'... I-IT AIN'T *P-POSSIBLE* !?

C'MON, NOW! YA GOTTA *APMIT* IT AIN'T P-POS---

PRESENTLY...

ALL RIGHT! SHOW'S OVER! COME ON IN!

LIEUTENANT! WHAT HAPPENED?

WELL, UH, GRANDENETT'S GONE! HE--

YEAH! LOOKIT THAT *TRAPDOOR!* HE PROBABLY MADE IT THROUGH THERE ALL THE WAY TO THE *ROOF!*

[illegible] WHAT'S THIS?

THE *FORCE*... I-IT'S *BEEN* HERE! IT'S CHANGED MITCH GRANDENETTI INTO... INTO ONE OF THESE LEAD FIGURES AND... AND *KILLED* HIM!

THAT EVENING, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

YOU'RE THE WRITER THAT'S BEEN RIDIN' AROUND WITH *CORRIGAN*, AIN'TCHA?

THAT'S RIGHT!

GIVE HIM *THIS*, WILLYA? ONE OF THE *STOOLIES* JUST CALLED IT IN!

WHY, I-IT'S A TIP ON THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE LAST MEMBER OF THE *GRANDENETTI* GANG! HE'S HOLED UP AT AN ABANDONED *SAWMILL*... ALL THE WAY UP NEAR *PEAKSKILL!*

I'VE GOT TO DRIVE OUT THERE AND *WARN* HIM!

UNLESS HE GIVES HIMSELF UP *SOON*, THAT... THAT *FORCE* WILL TRACK HIM DOWN AND *DESTROY* HIM!

AND SO, AFTER A LONG DRIVE..

MAYBE HE *IS* A KILLER... BUT EVEN A KILLER DESERVES A FAIR *TRIAL*...!

...A CHANCE TO FACE HIS *ACCUSERS* AND PRESENT EVIDENCE IN HIS OWN *BEHALF!*

I-IT'S AWFULLY *QUIET* AROUND HERE! MAYBE THAT TIP WAS JUST--

HUNH !?!

AWRIGHT, *COPPER!* FREEZE LIKE A *STATUE* OR I'LL SPILL YOUR *BRAINS!*

P-PLEASE! Y-YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* I-I'M *NOT* A POLICEMAN! I-I'M A *WRITER!*

IZZAT SO? WELL YA WALKED INTO A GREAT *STORY*, WRITER, ONLY YA AIN'T NEVER GONNA LIVE T' *PRINT* IT!

LISTEN TO ME! *PLEASE!* Y-YOU'VE GOT TO G-GIVE YOURSELF *UP*... RIGHT *AWAY*... BEFORE... BEFORE...

GIVE MYSELF *UP*?! WHATTA I LOOK TO YOU, *CRAZY*? YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE I KILLED?

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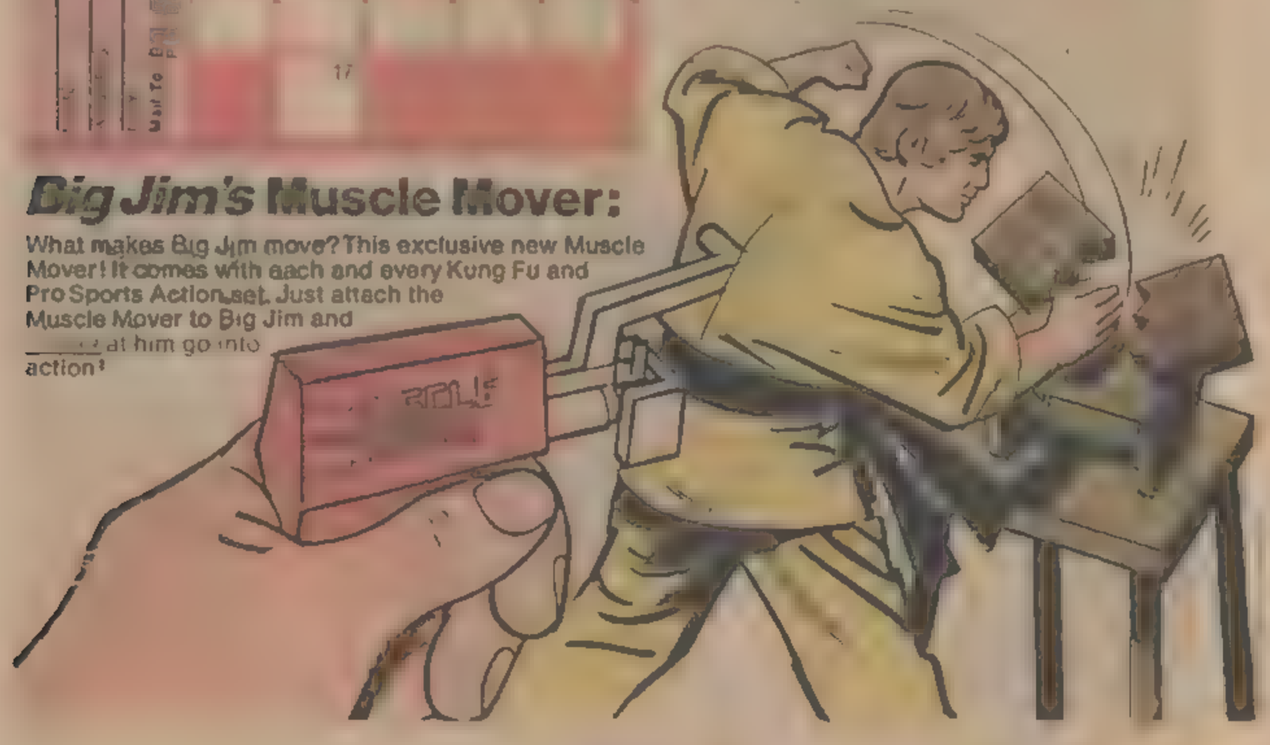
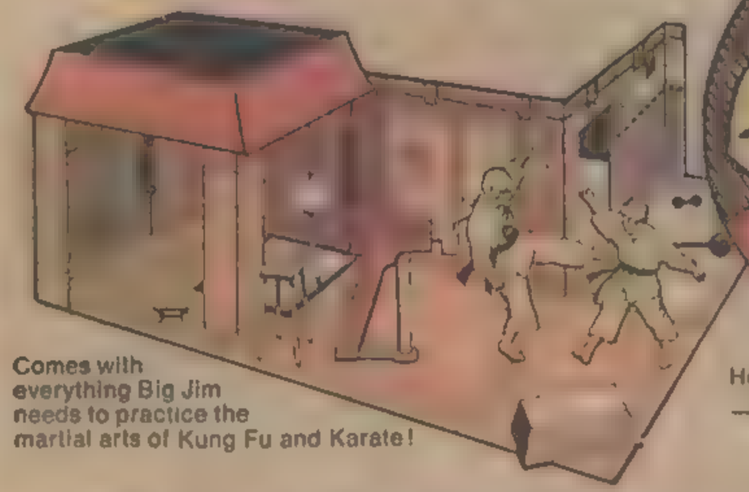
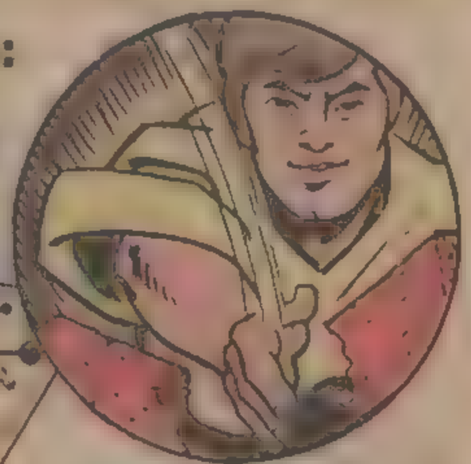


Big Jim's Kung Fu Studio:



Comes with everything Big Jim needs to practice the martial arts of Kung Fu and Karate!



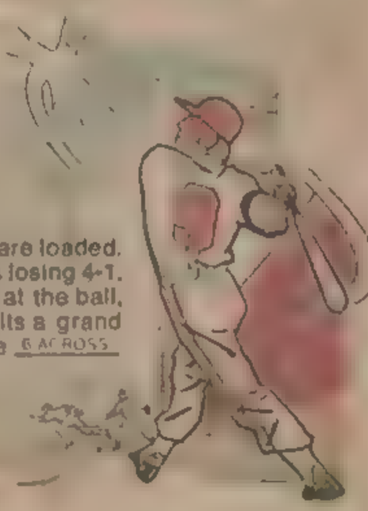
Here we see Big Jim about to break a 12 ACROSS with a Karate chop.

Big Jim's Pro Sports Gear:

This fantastic new sports set comes with Big Jim, and all the equipment he needs to play baseball, football and basketball.

Big Jim makes a fantastic shot over the opposing 2 ACROSS

Just complete the puzzle on the opposite page, and who knows? You may have 1 DOWN $100!



The bases are loaded. Big Jim's team is losing 4-1. Big Jim swings at the ball, and hits a grand slam home 6 ACROSS

Big Jim kicks a field 2 ACROSS and saves the day for his team.

I-F YOU SURRENDERED AT LEAST YOU'D BE ALIVE! I I'M CONVINCED THAT THERE'S AN OCCULT FORCE OF SOME KIND, OUT TO DESTROY YOU!

OCCULT WHAAT!? YOU MEAN, LIKE A GHOST?

WELL MAYBE! I DON'T EXACTLY KNOW THAT YET! BUT--

HAHAHA! SIT DOWN, YOU SPAGHETTI-HEADED LUNATIC!

I THINK FIRST I'LL USE YOUR EYEBALLS FOR TARGET PRACTICE, AND THEN--

HUNH-!?! IH-THAT FLAME! IT-IT'S ALIVE OR SOME-THIN'!

I WAS ALIVE... ONCE...

EVIL MEN LOCKED ME IN A BARREL OF CEMENT... AND THREW ME TO THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER...!

THAT WAS HOW... I DIED...!

AAAA

M-MY GOD! Y-YOU'VE TURNED HIM INTO... INTO... A BLOCK OF WOOD!

YET EVEN IN DEATH... I LIVE ON--! FOR SO LONG AS MEN WALLOW IN THE FILTH OF THEIR OWN EVIL...

BRRR!!

=GASP= N-NO! N-NOT THE SAW! Y-YOU'RE NOT GOING TO USE THE SAW!

... THEY WILL HAVE NEED OF...

...THE SPECTRE--!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU? WH WHY COULDN'T YOU AT LEAST LEAVE HIS FAMILY S-SOMETHING TO... TO BURY?

I-I'VE GOT TO GO SOME WHERE QUIET... BE BY MYSELF... H-HAVE SOME TIME TO THINK ALL THIS OVER!

BUT FIRST... FIRST I THINK I NEED A GOOD STIFF DRINK!

DATELINE: ADVENTURE

J-3614

Dear Joe,

The second reappearance of The Spectre in **Adventure Comics #432** was even better than the first. And considering the quality of the first, it was a tough act to follow.

Jim Aparo is, in my opinion, one of DC's most underrated artists. His awesome drawings of The Spectre surpassed last issue's. In addition, Aparo creates some of the best landscapes in comics, and shrouds them in a unique mood of eeriness unlike any other artist around, as shown on the cover and splash page. If The Spectre is rightfully awarded his own magazine, it is a must to keep Aparo on it.

Michael Fleisher's script was also as good as the preceding issue's, but it is here that a problem arises. The plotline of #432 resembled #431's to the point of violating an old comics taboo—formula. It is up to you to correct this grave mistake in the future.

Arlen L. Schumer, Fair Lawn, New Jersey

Formula writing is an easy trap to fall into, and we're doing our best to eradicate that blot from our record. Take a look at #434 and this issue, Arlen, and let us know how we're doing.

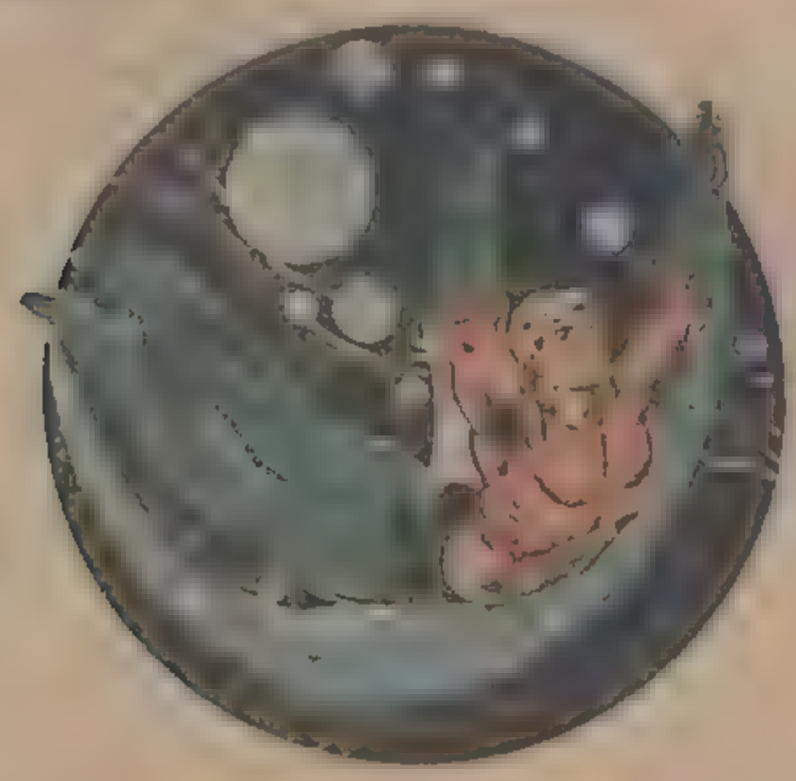
* * * * *

Dear Joe,

An interesting Aqua-announcement? Pray tell, what could it be?

Sam Hopkins, Port Washington, New York

The announcement is that Aquaman will be appearing in the next three or four issues of Adventure Comics, beginning with this one, in all-new stories. Our other projects will follow in the near future.



Dear Joe,

After my last fanatical fan letter, in which I absolutely drooled over the return of the Spectre, I was convinced that I had said all there was to say on the subject. Well, I can't be right all the time.

Aparo's art on "The Anguish of The Spectre" was superb, as usual. And yet, this was not the reason why I went into raptures over the story. The reason was Gwen! A vital part of the greatness of the original Spectre was his broken romance with Clarice. Now, through the beautiful work of Michael Fleisher, this has been restored!

Raymond Johnson, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Gwen was the beginning of writer Fleisher's attempts to develop a supporting cast for The Spectre. What's your reaction to his latest addition—crusading reporter Earl Crawford?

* * * * *

Gentlemen,

I can't remember a time in my many years of comic reading when I have been so disappointed, even disgusted, with a comic as I am with the current Spectre series in Adventure.

I find the entire concept repugnant to my moral values. The fanatical zeal with which Lt. Jim Corrigan wreaks vengeance on those he terms evildoers seems in itself evil.

Our troubled world has seen too much blind, self-righteous hatred, and too little love and compassion. Certainly there are people who commit crimes, often brutal ones, but that doesn't make them any less human.

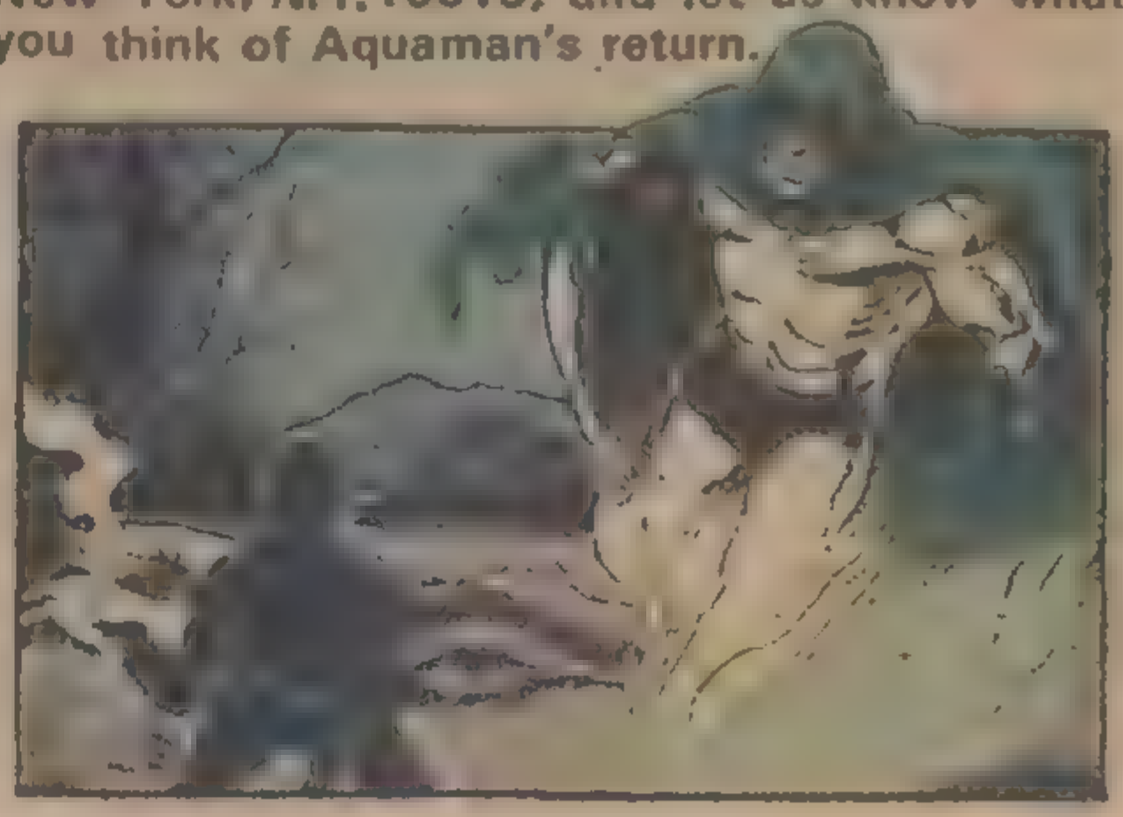
The human race has yet to learn that hatred breeds hatred. It's also appeared from your magazine that the spirit world needs to learn the same thing.

Brian Schuck, Bowling Green, Ohio

We're not too sure that being human (whether more OR less) is an answer to anything. The fact that a criminal remains human doesn't answer the question of whether he should be responsible for his actions. If, as we feel, someone who commits an act should suffer its consequences, the logic of The Spectre becomes clear—his "hatred" is directed at those who have no respect for human life, and if they have no respect for others' lives, they have but a fragile claim on their own.

* * * * *

Until next issue, please direct YOUR comments to DATELINE: ADVENTURE, National Periodical Publications, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y.10019, and let us know what you think of Aquaman's return.



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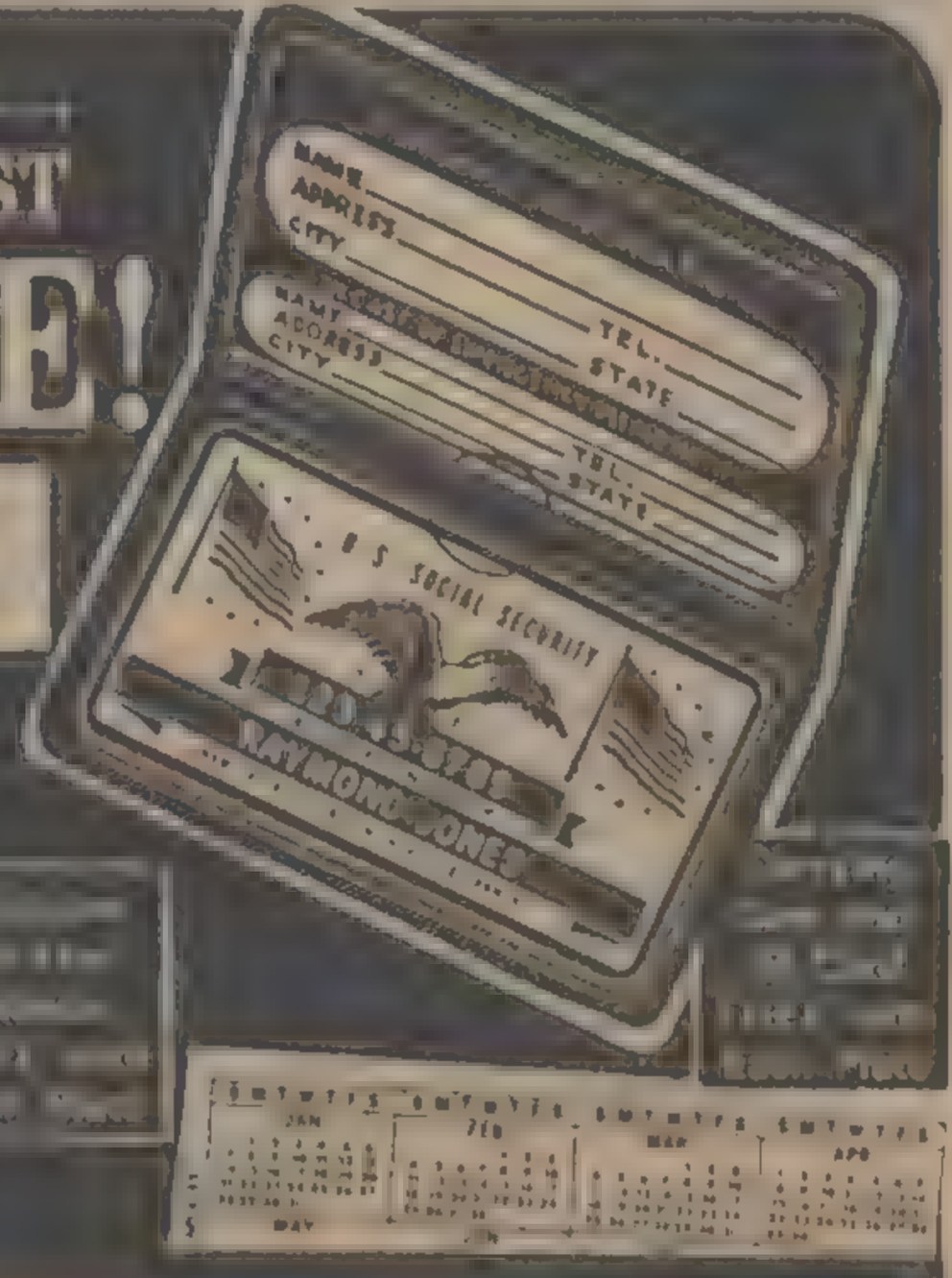

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AQUAMAN

"AS SOON AS A MAN PERCEIVES HOW MUCH THE THINGS HE HAS DISCARDED EXCEL THOSE WHICH HE POSSESS, LET HIM RETURN IN TIME AND RECALL THOSE WHICH HE RELINQUISHED."

- HORACE 65-8 BC

AH! IT'S *GREAT* TO FEEL THE RUSH OF DEEP OCEAN CURRENTS ONCE AGAIN!

AND TO LOOK UPON FAIR *ATLANTIS*!

THESE JLA MISSIONS SEEM TO TAKE LONGER AND LONGER *EACH TIME*! BEEN AWAY *TOO LONG*! FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN TWO OR THREE *YEARS* SINCE I VE --

SO NATURALLY, AS THE SEA KING RETURNS FROM A JLA MEETING AND NEARS THE GREAT DOMED CITY OF ATLANTIS...

HEY!

SOMETHING'S *WRONG*! STARTING TO FEEL *GROGGY*!

AS THE UNDERSEA CITY SLEEPS

STORY CREATED BY: MIKE GRELL • EDITOR: [illegible]

AS THOUGH IN A DREAM, HE GLIDES OVER THE FARMLAND JUST OUTSIDE THE PROTECTED CITY...

WHA--?

THEN, A SENSE-SHATTERING SHOCK... THE *MANTA-SHIP! BLACK MANTA* AND HIS VEN-- RUSTLING SQUID!

AQUAMAN!

I *GOT* TO *DO* SOME-THING -- *STOP* THEM

WHAT'S *GOING ON* AROUND HERE? ALL THESE FARMERS-- SLEEPING ON THE JOB!

GLAD TO SEE YOU! I WAS HOPING YOU'D SHOW UP!

ATTACKING! AND I'M STILL GROGGY!

CAN'T SEEM TO--

UNNGH!

STEALING FROM YOUR FARMLANDS MEANS NOTHING COMPARED TO GIVING YOU A PERSONAL DEMONSTRATION OF MY POWER!

YOU MAY HAVE DEFEATED ME IN THE PAST, BUT NOW I'VE GOT THE UPPER HAND!

BLAM

MOTIVATED BY SHEER DETERMINATION, THE SEA KING TRIES TO STRIKE BACK...

CLOSE, AQUAMAN! BUT NO CIGAR!

TROUBLE IS, OLD FRIEND-- YOUR MOVEMENTS ARE JUST TOO SLOW, TOO SLUGGISH!

GIVING ME PLENTY OF TIME TO DUCK OUT OF HARM'S WAY!

BUT THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE GOING TO DUCK OUT OF MY WAY!

THOK

GNNG!

NO, SEA KING! I HAVEN'T GOT TIME FOR ANY MORE GAMES!

IT'S TIME I WAS DEPARTING!

SQUID INK! IT'S--

AQUAMAN AGAIN HEADS BACK IN TOWARDS HIS FOE... HOWEVER, THIS TIME...

AND THE KING OF ATLANTIS FINDS HIMSELF INSTANTLY ENVELOPED IN AN INKY SHROUD...

CAN'T SEE HIM! CAN'T SEE ANYTHING!

AND... GROGGINESS STILL GROWING! CAN'T--

2

BY THE TIME AQUAMAN FINDS HIS WAY OUT OF THE INKY DARKNESS...

MANTA, HIS SHIP, THE SQUID... GONE!

A CLEAN GETAWAY!

NO SENSE STARTING A SEARCH FOR THEM!

NOT NOW! NOT THE WAY I FEEL!

BETTER JUST GET ON INTO THE CITY!

AT LEAST MY GROGGINESS SEEMS TO BE FINALLY GIVING WAY.

IN THROUGH THE DOME-ENTRANCE, AND OVER THE STRANGELY SILENT STREETS OF THE FABLED KINGDOM...

PEOPLE STARTING TO WAKE UP!

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE SAME FORCE THAT KNOCKED THE FARMERS OUT-- AND ALMOST PUT ME UNDER, TOO! SOME KIND OF CHEMICAL I WOULD GUESS!

PRESENTLY, AFTER DISCUSSING THE SITUATION WITH QUEEN MERA...

CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT! THIS IS THE FIFTH TIME MANTA HAS ATTACKED OUR FARMERS, STOLEN OUR FOOD! IT STARTED RIGHT AFTER I LEFT ON THAT LAST MISSION!

AND NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO STOP HIM!

BUT THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO!

IF HE ATTACKS ANOTHER FEW TIMES, MY PEOPLE WILL STARVE!

DR. VULCO, YOU AGREE, DON'T YOU, THAT SOME SORT OF CHEMICAL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE WATER IN ORDER TO KNOCK OUR PEOPLE OUT?

MORE THAN THAT! I'VE EVEN ISOLATED THE CHEMICAL USED! BUT SO FAR IT HAS DEFIED ANALYSIS!

AND I CAN'T COME UP WITH SOME ANTIDOTE TO COMBAT IT UNTIL I KNOW WHAT IT IS!

OKAY! KEEP WORKING ON IT!

IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL TRY TO DEVISE SOME ALTERNATE MEANS OF COMBATTING THIS REVENGE-HAPPY MISCREANT!

I'M CERTAIN HE'LL ATTACK US AGAIN!

BUT SPECIFICALLY WHERE IN THE KINGDOM WILL HE STRIKE NEXT?

WHERE AND WHEN??

LOOK NOW UPON THIS, THE LARGEST SHRIMP FARM WITHIN THE AGRICULTURAL AREA THAT SURROUNDS THE GREAT DOMED INNER-CITY OF ATLANTIS...

AND WATCH AS SUDDENLY, SILENTLY, SMALL PROJECTILES ARC OVER THIS AREA... CHEMICALS SEEPING FROM THEM AND SPREADING THROUGHOUT THESE SWIRLING WATERS OF THE ATLANTIC...

INSTANTLY, FARMERS FALL INTO UNEXPECTED SLEEP...

AND, WITHIN SECONDS, BLACK ATLANTA STANDS TRIUMPHANTLY OVER THESE SCENES OF HIS CRIMES, LAUGHING WITH DELIGHTED, DEMENTED GLEE.

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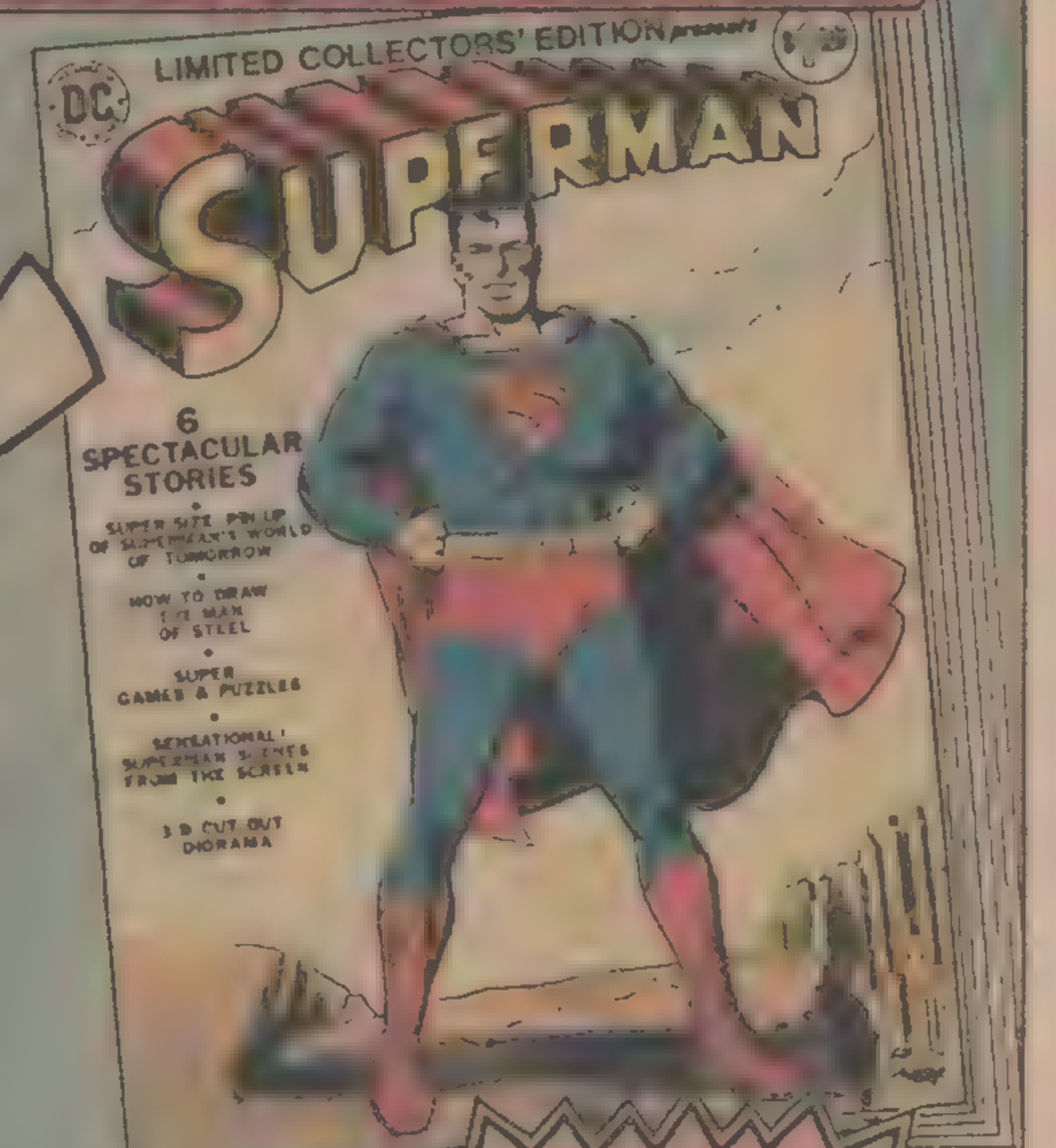
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IT'S ALL *MINE* NOW!

AND NOT ONLY WILL THIS BRING ME A LOT OF *MONEY*, BUT I'M ALSO HELPING TO *DESTROY* THE HOMELAND OF MY GREATEST ENEMY!

AND NO ONE CAN ST--

HUNH?

THAT MAN'S *MOVING!* HOW--?

AQUAMAN!

RIGHT YOU ARE, MANTA!

WHAT'S *WRONG*, FELLA? YOU DON'T SEEM AS *PLEASED* TO SEE ME *THIS* TIME!

BOK

COULD IT BE BECAUSE I'M *BREATHING AIR* AND THEREFORE AM NOT *AFFECTED* BY YOUR KNOCK-OUT CHEMICAL?

UNNGHHF!

THIS WAS THE ONLY *BIG* FARM YOU HADN'T HIT SO FAR! SO IT WASN'T *HARD* TO FIGURE YOU'D STRIKE *HERE* NEXT!

SO ALL I HAD TO DO WAS *BIDE MY TIME* AND--

STOP HIM, MEN! *GET HIM! KILL HIM!*

NO YOU DON'T!

SOF

CALL YOUR MEN *OFF!* TELL THEM TO GO BACK TO THE *SHIP!*

NOW-- OR ELSE YOU'LL *LOSE* YOUR ARM!

I *MEAN* IT, MANTA! *CALL THEM OFF!*

UNNNN... *ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT!*

YOU *HEARD* HIM, MEN! NOW...

AND EVEN AS MANTA SHOUTS HIS COMMAND, THE GREAT SEA KING CALLS UPON HIS ABILITY TO CONTROL THE SEA LIFE, TELEPATHIC WAVES EMANATING FROM HIS GREAT ATLANTEAN BRAIN...

BUT AS AQUAMAN CONCENTRATES, HE INADVERTENTLY LOOSENS HIS GRIP ON MANTA, AND--

I DON'T NEED MY MEN TO TAKE CARE OF YOU, FISH-MAN!

OOOMPHFF!

I CAN HANDLE YOU ALL BY MY--

NO WAY, MANTA! NO WAY!

YOU GOT THE BEST OF ME LAST TIME ONLY BECAUSE I WAS GROGGY!

AND I'M FAR FROM GROGGY NOW!

UNNH!

MY MEN ARE BACK ON THE SHIP NOW! WHY DON'T THEY DO SOMETHING? THEY KNOW WHAT MY STANDING ORDERS ARE!

AND EVEN NOW...

WAIT, MAN! THE BOSS IS OUT OF THE WAY, THEN

YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW! THEN I'M GONNA BLAST A HOLE THROUGH AQUAMAN BEFORE I DRIVE A TRAWLER THROUGH!

BUT SUDDENLY...

HM-WHAT'S GOING ON?

AQUAMAN MUST'VE CALLED UPON SOME OF HIS SEA FRIENDS TO ATTACK US!

!OOMPH!

NO! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! ALL THE FISH AROUND HERE ARE UNCONSCIOUS, JUST AS THE PEOPLE ARE!

BUT MANTA'S MEN HAVE LEARNED TO COEXIST WITH WHALES. SEA LIFE THAT LIVES AND BREATHES. THEY ARE ALL UNAFFECTED BY THE CHEMICALS AS IS THE SCUBA-EQUIPPED SEA KING!

THERE! THAT DOES IT!

THIS MUST BE THE 47TH TIME I'VE KNOCKED THIS PEE UNCONSCIOUS!

PLOK

AND NOW YOU'RE COMING WITH ME, MISTER!

HERE! GET YOUR BOSS ON BOARD! THEN GET OUT OF HERE-- IMMEDIATELY!

AND DON'T TRY ANYTHING CUTE! JUST ONE FALSE MOVE OUT OF ANY OF YOU AND I'LL HAVE MY WHALES CRUSH YOUR SHIP, AND ALL OF YOU ALONG WITH IT!

PRESENTLY.

MANTA IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE OF A PERSISTENT THORN IN MY SIDE. I WISH IT WEREN'T TRUE BUT I'M SURE HE'LL BE BACK AGAIN! AND SOON!

I MIGHT AS WELL FACE IT! SOONER OR LATER, THIS IS GOING TO BUILD UP INTO ONE BIG, FINAL SHOWDOWN BETWEEN MANTA AND MYSELF, FROM WHICH ONLY ONE OF US WILL EMERGE ALIVE!

BUT THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT! RIGHT NOW I'VE GOT PLEASANTER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT! NIERA! AND A GOOD HEARTY MEAL! COME TO THINK OF IT I'M FAMISHED!

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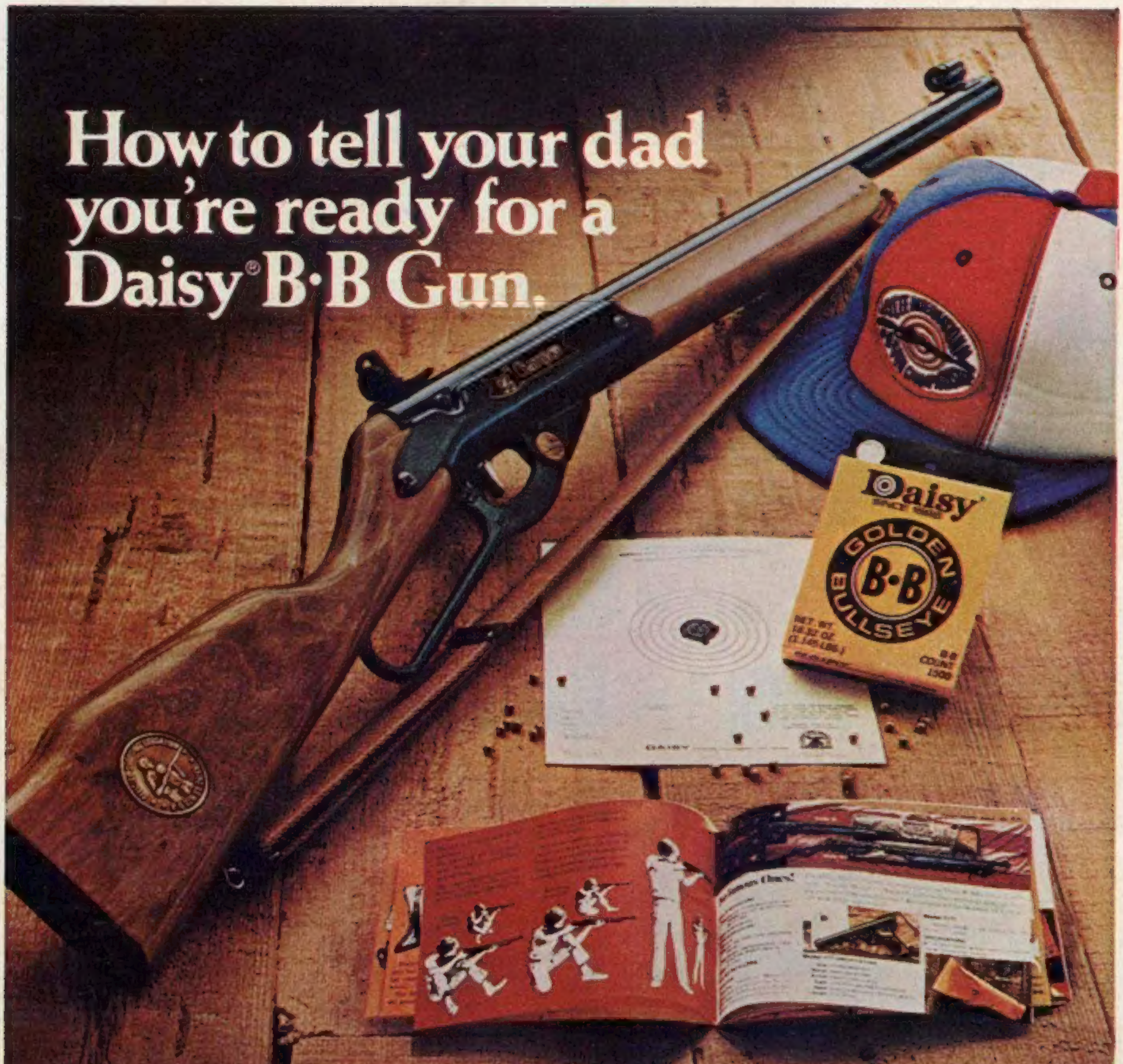

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